

Agreement for

Co-operation

Between the Presbyterian,
Methodist and Congregational
Churches in Canada, pending
their organic union.

(Revised Jan. 3, 1917)

RB 160, 808

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE MOVEMENT FOR CO-OPERATION

In March, 1908, the Home Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada recommended the General Assembly to appoint a Committee to act with similar Committees of other Churches, for the purpose of considering co-operation in Home Mission work, the work of this Central Committee to be:—

1. To define the policy to be followed in regard to comity and co-operation.

2. To adjudicate upon special cases which may be referred to them, where fields may be re-arranged to prevent overlapping.

Knowledge of the action taken by the Presbyterian Church was, by the Convener of their Committee, communicated to the authorities of the Anglican, Baptist, Congregational and Methodist Churches. In response to this communication, the Congregational Church, in 1908, and the Methodist Church, at their Quadrennial Conference in 1910, appointed similar committees, assigning to them the same duty that had been assigned to the Committee of the Presbyterian Church.

The Secretary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, in reply to the communication sent to him, stated that, in the Church of England in Canada, the work in each Diocese is entirely under the control of the Bishop of the Diocese. The Joint Committee therefore decided to forward to each Bishop of the Church of England a copy of the plan of co-operation agreed upon, and extended to him a very cordial invitation to participate with the Joint Committee in his Diocese in this co-operation.

The Home Mission Board of the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec appointed a Committee to meet with the Committees of the sister Churches; but the members of that Committee, after a lengthened consideration of the scope of the proposed co-operation, stated frankly that, while their policy has always been to discourage the opening of new fields unless there was a reasonable prospect of the fields early becoming self-supporting, they could not, consistently with their principles, enter into any scheme of co-operation except among the non-English-speaking settlers.

The Committees of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches therefore met in joint session early in the year 1911 and drew up "An Agreement for Co-operation in Home Mission Work." Under this agreement the three Churches have been working for six years, more especially in the Provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, with ever increasing efficiency, cordiality and unity.

During these years the question of organic union was voted upon favorably by the Congregational Churches, by the Methodist Church, and in 1916 the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church decided in favor of union and so notified the sister Churches. Pending the ultimate union of the three bodies it was felt that a much larger measure of co-operation was possible and the original "Agreement for Co-operation in Home Mission Work" should be revised and amended.

The Central Committee on Co-operation of the three denominations therefore met in the Board Room of the Wesley Building, Toronto, on January 3 and 4, 1917, and

reached the following agreement as to the plan of co-operation. The accredited delegates were as follows:

Presbyterian Committee on Co-operation and Union Churches

Rev. Professor A. B. Baird, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly, Winnipeg, Convener; President R. A. Falconer, C.M.G., Toronto; Rev. Principal A. Gandier, D.D., LL.D., Toronto; Rev. W. G. Wallace, D.D., Toronto; Dr. Hamilton Cassels, K.C., Toronto; Mr. J. K. Macdonald, Toronto; Mr. Justice Sutherland, Toronto; Rev. D. R. Drummond, D.D., Hamilton; Rev. W. J. Clark, D.D., Montreal; Rev. W. T. Herridge, D.D., Ottawa; Rev. G. C. Pidgeon, D.D., Toronto; Rev. J. H. Edmison, B.A., Toronto; President Walter C. Murray, LL.D., Saskatoon; Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, D.D., Acting Secretary, Toronto.

Methodist Committee on Co-operation

Rev. S. D. Chown, D.D., LL.D., Toronto; Rev. James Allen, M.A., Toronto; Mr. H. H. Fudger, Toronto; Mr. N. W. Rowell, Toronto; Mr. Alex. Mills, Toronto; Rev. F. L. Brown, Orillia; Mr. W. H. Goodwin, Montreal; Rev. George Steel, D.D., St. John; Rev. W. A. Cooke, D.D., Virden; Rev. Oliver Darwin, D.D., Regina; Rev. J. H. Riddell, D.D., Edmonton; Rev. T. C. Buchanan, Edmonton; Rev. J. H. White, D.D., Sardis.

Committee on Co-operation of the Congregational Union of Canada

Rev. Hugh Pedley, D.D., Montreal; Rev. Frank J. Day, D.D., Toronto; Rev. William T. Gunn, D.D., Toronto.

The above delegates constitute the Central Committee and were empowered, by the action of the Churches to which they belong, to prepare the following plan of co-operation:

Rev. Professor A. B. Baird, D.D., Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and Rev. S. D. Chown, D.D., General Superintendent of the Methodist Church, acted as Chairmen, and Rev. W. T. Gunn, D.D., Secretary of the Congregational Union, acted as Secretary.

The Central Committee would place on record their gratitude to God for the larger measure of co-operation made possible, for the unity which enabled its members to agree unanimously upon every part of the plan of co-operation as herein presented, and for the joy these negotiations have given as a foretaste of the larger fellowship and greater Christian efficiency which in the pending union of the three Churches will be brought to bear on the growing problems of the Kingdom of God in Canada.

In the judgment of this Committee the principle of union in different localities, until the organic union of the negotiating Churches is consummated, should find expression in the organization of charges under this plan of co-operation jointly adopted by the negotiating Churches, rather than by the organization of local union Churches.

ORGANIZATION

In order to secure the co-operation desired, they recommend:—

I. That Committees on co-operation, empowered to deal with the matters hereafter set forth and designated "Co-operating Committees," be appointed in the various Synods, Annual Conferences, or Associations, wherever this has not already been done. These Co-operating Committees shall meet at least once a year.

II. That these Co-operating Committees define the local districts and appoint or secure the appointment of local Committees in the various districts of the Synod, Conference or Association. Home Mission Superintendents, Chairmen of Districts, Conveners of Presbyteries, and officers of like rank in the Congregational Church to be, ex-officiis, members of these Local Committees.

III. That the principles of Co-operation be applied:

1. In the adjustment of overlapping in existing fields.
2. In the arranging of religious work in absolutely new districts.
3. In the work to be done amongst the foreign nationalities.

OVERLAPPING IN EXISTING FIELDS

IV. That the Local Committee look carefully into all the circumstances in any locality in which, in their judgment, or as instructed by the Co-operating Committee, or by this Central Committee, or at the request of the Synod, Conference, or Association, co-operation ought to be attempted, with a view of recommending to the Co-operating Committees that the locality in question be left in the care of one of the co-operating Churches; the results of their investigations and deliberations to be reported both to the Co-operating Committee, and to this Central Committee, on printed forms that will be provided for this purpose.

When a field or portion of a Province has been assigned to any one of the Co-operating Churches, the other denominations shall not take up new work at any

point nearer to any of the appointments of such field or portion of a Province than six miles, without the approval of the Local and Co-operating Committees.

By a field is understood the territory under the charge of a missionary or minister. Such fields may include all charges paying not more than \$1,200.00 per annum for ministerial support.

V. That in recommending to which of the co-operating Churches the task of ministering to any particular field shall be entrusted, Local Committees give due weight to the following considerations: Priority of occupation of the field; the relative number of members and adherents belonging to the different denominations; the relative amounts contributed by the people of the different denominations for the support of the ordinances among themselves; and the readiness of the respective denominations to minister to the field promptly and effectively.

In any case in which a distinct majority of all the people express a preference for the ministrations of a particular Church, that preference shall have special consideration, even though the Church selected should not be the strongest in other respects.

It shall be competent for any congregation of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches, and for a Quarterly Official Board of the Methodist Church, to appoint not more than three persons to state their case before a Local Committee, a Co-operating Committee, or this Central Committee. This refers to fields where a change may be contemplated.

When a field has been assigned to any of the denominations, the Co-operating Committee shall make adequate provision

for visiting such a field by representatives of the Churches concerned, who shall explain what has been done and urge the people to unite heartily in loyal support of the arrangement made by the Co-operating Committee and in the prosecution of the work of the Kingdom of God in the community.

Should any difficulty affecting the co-operation arise on any such field, then it shall be the duty of the Co-operating Committee to provide for the visiting of the field with a view to bringing about unity and harmony.

VI. When a field has been assigned to any Church by a Co-operating Committee, the roll of membership shall be composed of all the members of the uniting Churches within the territory assigned, and such a united body may organize—

(1) According to the usage of the denomination to which it is assigned, or

(2) In the manner prescribed for the local Church in the "Basis of Union of The United Church of Canada," as found in Section II. B on Polity, but shall have complete connexional relationship with that denomination to which it has been assigned. Such organization shall in addition to supporting the local Church also support the connexional funds and interests of the denomination with which it is identified.

The Local Committee shall consider the assets and liabilities of any congregations which it is proposed to unite under co-operation, and shall give advice as to how the finances of the new field shall be maintained, and the obligations of any congregation which becomes incorporated in the new charge may be met, and shall re-

port their action to the Co-operating Committee.

In the judgment of the Central Committee all Church property on a field assigned to any one of the co-operating Churches should be owned and administered by the Church to which the field has been assigned. This judgment is given on condition that all financial liabilities to the Churches leaving the field shall be discharged.

(NOTE—All transactions in regard to property previously held in the name of the Church or Churches withdrawing must be carried through in accordance with the regulations of the denomination in whose name it has been held).

The section of the "Basis of Union", Polity II. B, referred to above, is as follows:

9. The liberty of the pastoral charge shall be recognized to the fullest extent compatible with:

(a) The oversight of the spiritual interests of the charge by the minister (or ministers) and a body of men specially chosen and set apart or ordained for that work, who shall jointly constitute the session;

(b) The efficient co-operation of the representatives of the various departments of the work of the charge by means of a meeting to be held at least quarterly;

(c) The hearty co-operation of the various pastoral charges in the general work of the Church, and

(d) The exercise by the higher governing bodies or courts of their powers and functions, hereinafter set forth.

10. New pastoral charges or local churches shall be formed with the consent of a Presbytery by persons residing within its bounds, who declare their adherence to

the principles of The United Church, and their desire for the formation of such charge or church. Missions may be organized as pastoral charges by Presbytery of its own motion, or on the suggestion of the Missionary Superintendent or the Minister, under such regulations as the General Council may pass.

Before sanctioning the formation of a pastoral charge or local church, the Presbytery shall be required to hear and consider the representations of any pastoral charge that may be affected by the proposed action.

11. (a) The members of the Church entitled to all church privileges are those who, on a profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, have been received into full membership. The children of such persons and all baptized children are members of the Church, and it is their duty and privilege, when they reach the age of discretion, to enter into full membership. Admission to full membership, and granting of certificates of removal, shall be by the action of the Session, and by the action of those in full membership where desired by the pastoral charge.

(b) The members of a local church who are entitled to vote at all meetings are persons in full membership, whose names are on the roll of the church. With the consent of these, adherents who contribute regularly to the support of the Church may vote on temporal matters.

12. The members of a local church shall meet annually and more frequently if they deem it advisable.

13. The Session shall have oversight of the spiritual interests of the pastoral charge. The management of its temporal and finan-

cial affairs shall be entrusted to a Committee of Stewards. The Official Board, consisting of the Session and Committee of Stewards, with representatives in full church membership, of such other departments of church work as may be agreed upon by the General Council, shall meet quarterly, and more frequently if they deem it advisable, for the consideration of matters of joint interest.

14. The members of the Session, other than the Minister, shall be chosen by those in full church membership, and shall hold office under regulations to be passed by the General Council.

15. (a) It shall be the duty of the Session to have the oversight of:

(1) The admission of persons into full membership, and the granting of certificates of removal.

(2) The conduct of members, with power to exercise discipline.

(3) The administration of the sacraments.

(4) The religious training of the young, and the organization of meetings for Christian fellowship, instruction and work.

(5) The order of public worship, including the service of praise and the use of the church edifice.

(6) The care of the poor, and the visiting of the sick.

(b) It shall also be its duty:

(7) To receive and judge petitions, etc., from members.

(8) To transmit petitions, appeals, etc., to Presbytery.

(9) To recommend suitable laymen to Presbyteries for license to preach.

(10) To recommend suitable candidates for the ministry.

16. The stewards shall be chosen by the

local church, and, wherever practicable, should be persons in full membership.

It shall be the duty of the Committee of Stewards to secure contributions for the purposes of the local church, and to disburse the moneys received for these purposes.

17. It shall be the duty of the Official Board:

(1) To secure contributions for missionary and other general objects of the Church.

(2) To select representatives, in full Church membership, of the pastoral charge to the Presbytery.

(3) To submit to the pastoral charge or local church for its consideration reports on life and work, including a full statement of receipts and expenditures, of indebtedness and of estimates for the ensuing year.

(4) To transmit from the pastoral charge, through the Presbytery, to the Settlement Committee, representations concerning the pastoral relation.

(5) To attend to matters affecting the pastoral charge not assigned to any of the other bodies.

18. All lands, premises and property acquired for the use of a local church or a pastoral charge of The United Church shall be held, used and administered under the trusts of the above Model Trust Deed (See "Polity" par. 6).

ORIGINATING WORK IN NEW TERRITORY

VII. That the Co-operating Committees at their Annual Meetings consider the plans proposed by the several denominations for work in new territory for the ensuing year, as reported by their Home Mission

Superintendents. They shall also review such new work as may have been initiated by the Local Committees, or Missionary Superintendents, since the last meeting.

1. When any one of the co-operating Churches is ready to undertake work in a new unoccupied field, the proposal shall be submitted by the Superintendent of Missions of the Church undertaking the work, to the Local Committee of the district in which the field lies, with full information regarding the field, including the numerical strength of the several Protestant denominations in the community, and the location and distance of adjacent missions. The Local Committee, thus consulted shall, without delay, send reply to the Superintendent, mailing also a copy of that reply to the Secretary of the Co-operating Committee having jurisdiction.

2. The Home Mission Superintendents of the respective denominations shall look into the needs of unoccupied territory and as far as possible consult with one another before work is undertaken therein.

3. In any case, however, in which such consultation would unnecessarily delay ministration to the needs of a new community, the initiation of work by any denomination may be undertaken as at present; the initiation of such work, along with full information regarding the field as provided above, to be reported immediately to the Chairman of the nearest Local Committee, and to be subject to the provision contained in the following paragraph.

4. Work so initiated, after the 1st of April, 1911, shall be subject to the review of the Co-operating Committee; and in all such cases priority of occupation shall have no weight in determining the particu-

lar denomination to which the field should be assigned.

5. Regard should be had to the disadvantage under which any of the denominations may be placed in putting a stop to overlapping in existing fields, and also to the number contributed by such denomination to the sister denominations in fields where its membership is not sufficiently numerous to justify a separate Church, by assigning to that denomination in certain cases that may be agreed upon a specified district as its sphere of labor.

WORK AMONGST THE NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING RACES

VIII. That, in the work among the non-English-speaking part of our population, certain districts or nationalities be assigned to the different denominations; but that, if preferred in any locality, there be a combination of resources for the prosecution of a united work, and that the matter be referred to the Home Mission Departments of the co-operating Churches to work out.

REVISION

IX. Any of the co-operating Churches, at any meeting of a Co-operating Committee, may give notice through its Missionary Superintendent, of its desire for a reconsideration of the decision arrived at in regard to any field or district. Such reconsideration shall be given at the next meeting of the Committee, or at a special meeting which may be called at the request of any three members of the Committee.

X. Modifications of the plan of co-operation above set forth may be adopted by this Central Committee from time to time as experience may prove to be desirable. Local and Co-operating Committees are

invited to submit to this Committee such modifications as they consider necessary.

(Signed by)

A. B. BAIRD,

*Moderator of the General Assembly of
the Presbyterian Church of Canada,
Chairman.*

S. D. CHOWN,

*General Superintendent of the Method-
ist Church of Canada, Chairman.*

W. T. GUNN,

*Secretary of the Congregational Union
of Canada, Secretary.*